



Nottingham Girls' High School students attend United Nations event in New York

Two Year 13 students from Nottingham Girls' High School have recently returned from New York after representing the UK as delegates of the National Council of Women Great Britain at CSW61 (the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 61).

Jenny Raw, 17, from Mapperley, and Rachel Wibberley, 18, from Alfreton, were specially invited to join the delegation in the Big Apple at this prestigious occasion at the beginning of March.



The pair spent a week attending a variety of conferences, forums and discussions as part of the event – as well as taking to the podium to share their own views in speeches delivered before influential guests and dignitaries. Rachel spoke about the importance of empowering girls and young women in the workplace at the start of the week, and Jenny delivered her speech on economic empowerment on the final day.

Their trip kicked off with the CSW Youth Forum, which focuses on tackling gender equality in young people across the world. As well as highlighting the incredible injustices suffered by girls, there was a stress on the particular importance of spreading the message to boys and young men too. Jenny and Rachel had sought the views of other girls by inviting them to contribute ideas for the Youth Statement which was read out at the start of proceedings.

During the trip, the students also met the team behind the UK Mission to the UN where they were given an insight into the negotiations that take place inside the UN and with fellow countries. They met members of the UK Parliament Baroness Fiona Hodgson and Baroness Hillary Armstrong, and also Helene Reardon-Bond,

who is responsible for the equality strategy and legislation across government, and Hilary Spencer, Director of the Government Equalities Office.



Despite being hit by the snowy Storm Stella during their visit stateside, on their final day, student Jenny took to the podium at an event sponsored by the International Council of Women, focusing on women's leadership in transformative politics.

Rachel and Jenny were chosen to travel to New York as a result of their work with the National Council of Young Women (NCYW) - an organisation formed in 2008 which represents young women at a national level, working with the well-established National Council of

Women to lobby government on issues that young women care about.

The opportunity was made possible by the funding and support of the school and the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), of which Nottingham Girls' High School is a member.

Nottingham Girls' High School's well-established NCYW group meets regularly and plans events such as marking the International Day of the Girl, Human Rights Day and International Women's Day.

Jenny, who is also Head Girl at the school, said: "Representing the National Council of Women Great Britain at the UN has been an amazing opportunity. Reflecting on our time there really reinforces how much of a fantastic time we had, how much we learnt, and how much we hope to implement now that we have returned."

Looking to the future, Jenny added: "We must be the agents of change. We must think of ourselves, as young women, as the potential future Secretary General of the United Nations or Prime Minister of the UK. The overall message we took away from this event is that we must not restrict ourselves based on societal views or traditions. Once women are empowered within themselves, they have the ability to empower others through transformative politics."

Julie Keller, Head of Nottingham Girls' High School, who accompanied the students to New York, said: "The trip was a fantastic opportunity for the students and we all had a great and busy time in New York. It was amazing to see them both play an integral part in the conference and meet a variety of inspirational and influential role models. I am sure it has spurred them on further with their work with the National Council of Young Women."



ENDS

About Nottingham Girls' High School

Nottingham Girls' High School is an independent day school for girls aged between 4 – 18. Part of the GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) it is one of the largest schools in the group with over 800 pupils.

About Jenny and Rachel

Jenny Raw is Head Girl of Nottingham Girls' High School. Rachel Wibberley leads the East Midlands region in the UK Youth Parliament. She has previously volunteered in a women's empowerment centre and girls' orphanage in India.

Last year, both girls were selected to work on a Cabinet Office initiative to liaise with the Lord President of the Council, and also gave speeches at the National Council of Women's annual conference in October.

About CSW61

The Commission on the Status of Women is the principal intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and shapes global standards on policies which affect women. 2017 marked its 61st meeting.

About the GDST

The Girls' Day School Trust (GDST) is the UK's leading group of independent girls' schools, with nearly 4,000 staff and 20,000 students between the ages of three and 18. As a charity that owns and runs a family of 24 schools and two academies in England and Wales, it reinvests all its income in its schools. Founded in 1872, the GDST has a long history of pioneering innovation in the education of girls.

For more details about GDST schools, please go to www.gdst.net and follow us on Twitter @GDST

About NCW

The National Council of Women of Great Britain was originally founded in 1895 as a response to the unsatisfactory working conditions faced by many women at the time. It soon evolved into a nationwide organisation affiliated to the International Council of Women (ICW) and has over the years worked tirelessly on all issues of concern to women. In 2000 the organisation was given special consultative status at the United Nations, enabling it to send representatives to sessions such as the Commission on the Status of Women, held annually in New York. Today, the NCW continues to influence issues ranging from consumer awareness to developments and challenges in science and health, making recommendations to Government and other decision-making agencies and providing a key support network for women in the UK.